



**Homeland
Security**

Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655

July 19, 2019

SENT BY ELECTRONIC MAIL TO: foia@americanoversight.org

Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight
1030 15th Street, NW
Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005

Re: **2019-HQFO-00237**

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is the electronic final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), dated December 18, 2018, and received by this office on December 18, 2018. You are seeking all records reflecting communications (including email messages, email attachments, notes taken during phone calls, and calendar invitations or meetings) including the search terms (a) “migrant” and/or “caravan” and (b) “Soros” and/or “Middle Eastern” from the following DHS political appointees: (a) Secretary Nielsen; (b) Acting Deputy Secretary Claire Grady; (c) Executive Secretary Christina Bobb; (d) Chief of Staff Chad Wolf; (e) Deputy General Counsel and adviser Dimple Shah; (f) Anyone serving as White House Liaison; (g) Anyone serving as a Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary; (h) Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Jonathan Rath Hoffman; (i) Deputy Assistant Secretary for public Affairs Tyler Houlton; (j) Assistant Press Secretary Andrea Palermo; (k) Assistant Press Secretary McLaurine Klingler; and (l) Assistant Press Secretary Katie Waldman (Date Range for Record Search: From 10/12/2018 to 12/18/2018).

A search of the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) for documents responsive to your request produced a total of six pages. Of those pages, I have determined that three pages of the records are releasable in their entirety and three pages are partially releasable, pursuant to Title 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6), FOIA Exemptions 6.

Enclosed are six pages with certain information withheld as described below.

FOIA Exemption 6 exempts from disclosure personnel or medical files and similar files the release of which would cause a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This requires a balancing of the public's right to disclosure against the individual's right to privacy. The privacy interests of the individuals in the records you have requested outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information. Any private interest you may have in that information does not factor into the aforementioned balancing test.

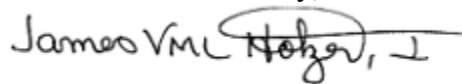
You have a right to appeal the above withholding determination. Should you wish to do so, you must send your appeal and a copy of this letter, within 90 days of the date of this letter, to: Privacy Office, Attn: FOIA Appeals, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0655, Washington, D.C. 20528-0655, following the procedures outlined in the DHS FOIA regulations at 6 C.F.R. Part 5 § 5.8. Your envelope and letter should be marked "FOIA Appeal." Copies of the FOIA and DHS FOIA regulations are available at www.dhs.gov/foia.

Provisions of FOIA allow DHS to charge for processing fees, up to \$25, unless you seek a waiver of fees. In this instance, because the cost is below the \$25 minimum, there is no charge.

Additionally, you have a right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) which mediates disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. If you are requesting access to your own records (which is considered a Privacy Act request), you should know that OGIS does not have the authority to handle requests made under the Privacy Act of 1974. You may contact OGIS as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

If you need any further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact the analyst below who processed your request and refer to **2019-HQFO-00237**. You may send an e-mail to foia@hq.dhs.gov, call 202-343-1743 or toll free 1-866-431-0486, or you may contact our FOIA Public Liaison in the same manner.

Sincerely,



James Holzer
Deputy Chief FOIA Officer

Enclosure(s): Responsive Documents, 6 pages

From:	Ciccone, Christine (b)(6) (b)(6)
To:	"Taylor, Miles (b)(6) (b)(6) "McCament, James (b)(6) (b)(6) "Lim, Evelyn (b)(6) (b)(6) "Gountanis, John (b)(6) (b)(6)
CC:	"Wolf, Chad (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject:	Fwd: Today's Readout (10-24-18) - Migrant Caravan Update
Date:	2018/10/24 17:33:17
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

FYSA - readout from Hill caravan call today. Note State had two folks on the line and will - moving forward - have State participation on the call.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Phillips, James M" (b)(6)
Date: October 24, 2018 at 5:01:52 PM EDT
To: "Ciccone, Christine" (b)(6) "Micone, Vincent"
(b)(6) "Wonnenberg, David"
(b)(6) "Dinh, Uyen" (b)(6) "Foltz,
Jon" (b)(6) "Marquardt, Kristen"
(b)(6) "Rocca, Andrew" (b)(6)
"Lange, John" (b)(6)
Subject: Today's Readout (10-24-18) - Migrant Caravan Update

All:

Attached you will find a readout of today's congressional staff conference call re: the Migrant Caravan.

Jamie

James M. Phillips
Director | Office of Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

(b)(6)

Sender:	Ciccone, Christine (b)(6) (b)(6)
Recipient:	"Taylor, Miles (b)(6) (b)(6) "McCament, James (b)(6) (b)(6) "Lim, Evelyn (b)(6) (b)(6) "Gountanis, John (b)(6) (b)(6) "Wolf, Chad (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent Date:	2018/10/24 17:33:16
Delivered Date:	2018/10/24 17:33:17

Honduran Migrant Caravan Congressional Staff Call Summary

October 24, 2018 at 2:00PM

Participants

- (b)(6) USCIS
- (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) CBP Office of Intelligence
- Michael Huston, DHS Office of Policy
- (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations
- (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) ICE Homeland Security Investigations
- (b)(6);(b)(7)(C) ICE Homeland Security Investigations
- *NOTE: Department of State did not participate*

Key Updates

- ~~(U//LES)~~ An estimated 3,000 are in transit from Huixtla, Chiapas State, Mexico. Another 2,000 have traveled further inland. There are three large follow-on groups. CBP is currently tracking 1,000 that have reached Guatemala City, and 500 that are en route north of Guatemala City. Guatemala will attempt to detain and repatriate Honduran migrants, and is surging federal police to do so. The most likely destination for the migrants is the Rio Grande Valley, or San Ysidro, but it is too early to make a final determination.
- ~~(U//LES)~~ As of this morning, roughly 2,800 Hondurans have been repatriated. The Mexican Secretary of the Interior indicated the Mexican government (GoM) is seeking an organized migratory flow, and will not seek repatriations. The GoM received 1,743 asylum claims, as of the afternoon of 23 October.
- ~~(U//LES)~~ The Mexican National Migration Institute (INM) asked SEMAR to patrol the Suchiate River to prevent further illegal crossings and prevent drownings.

Congressional Staff Attendees

- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC)
- Senate Judiciary Committee (SJC)
- House Judiciary Committee (HJC)
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC)
- Senate and House Personal Staff
 - Senator Murphy (D-CT)
 - Senator Udall (D-NM)
 - Senator Leahy (D-VT)
 - Representative Vela (D-TX-34)

Q&A

- **Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC), Minority**
 - Do you have a further breakdown of the 372 migrants from the April 2018 caravan that are still in immigration proceedings, whose claims were rejected, or who have been removed?

- USCIS: DOJ has that information; removals are not something that we track.
 - Is there any evidence that immigrants from the April caravan entered the U.S. illegally without being apprehended?
 - *This was taken as a get-back by CBP.*
 - Are immigrants traveling in a caravan more likely to cross the border illegally?
 - CBP: We are encouraging all migrants to go through Ports of Entry. They are less successful in entering the U.S. illegally, because we have advance notice of their arrival, and have prepared resources along the border.
 - You indicated that CBP may reassign officers who are trained in handling large crowds. How many have received this training, and what does the training look like?
 - CBP: We have a number of officers that are trained in handling large crowds, who are already positioned at key Points of Entry.
- **Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Minority**
 - Previous phone calls included a breakdown of men, women, and children. How did you get those numbers?
 - DHS PLCY: We are unable to provide specific data. Anecdotal evidence shows that this is a mixed flow. DHS is not in a position to disclose the specifics on information that we have received.
 - Are they en route to Arriaga?
 - CBP: They are not stating their destination more than 24 hours out. 200 are headed to Arriaga. We do not know the destination of the remaining members at this time.
- **House Committee on the Judiciary, Majority**
 - USCIS mentioned that there are additional asylum officers available to assist with increased processing capacity at the southern border. If you pulled them to conduct credible fear interviews, will you be removing capacity from other areas of immigration adjudication?
 - USCIS: At this time, we don't think we will need to reassign asylum officers from other offices. We believe we have sufficient staff to meet the need. But, we have the ability to pull those resources in the event of an emergency situation.
 - Can an individual apply for asylum in two different countries at the same time?
 - USCIS: It is possible to have pending asylum applications in two different countries, but it would impact their eligibility for an asylum claim in the U.S.

- **Senator Murphy Personal Staff**

- When do you expect these caravans to reach the southern border?
 - CBP: Their arrival depends on the route that they take. If their destination is the Rio Grande Valley, it will be 1-2 weeks. If their destination is San Ysidro, it will be 2-4 weeks.
- What would be the plan if you were to receive a large caravan of 2,000-3,000 at once?
 - CBP: We are unable to process 2,000-3,000 migrants at one time. We would follow our normal procedures, and they would be processed as capacity was available.

- **Senator Udall Personal Staff**

- What resources are being sent down to the border?
 - CBP: We are working with local law enforcement to expand our resources at different locations where the caravan may arrive.
- Can you explain what was done to free up bed space at the Rio Grande Valley facility? Have there been more rapid removals?
 - ICE: Bed space has opened via normal immigration proceedings removals and releases. We have not surged removals.

- **Congressional Hispanic Caucus**

- Was there discussion with foreign partners about Vice President Pence's tweet that Venezuela is funding the caravan?
 - CBP: The Mexican government has not identified all members of the caravan. There is no evidence as that Venezuela is funding the caravan.
- During the April 2018 caravan, it seemed like there was insufficient capacity. Is there better coordination with Mexico? When will you have more information on those planning efforts to ensure preparation this time? Once they pass through Chiapas, will you have a better idea?
 - CBP: We can't just focus on the migrants, we also have to maintain national security and our core missions. We will follow procedures to process any migrants in an orderly fashion.
- During a STAFFDEL to the San Diego Port of Entry, they were constructing holding facilities. Has the permanent structure been completed, or will you still be using temporary holding facilities? When will it open?
 - CBP: They are not holding facilities, they are processing centers. Construction is ongoing, and will be finished in 18 months.

- **Senator Leahy Personal Staff**

- The President has said that he has good information that there are people of Middle Eastern descent in the caravan. Is there evidence to support this?
 - CBP: We can't provide information on raw data at this time.
- If they are of Middle Eastern descent, how would that impact how you processed them?
 - CBP: We process all migrants without regard to nationality.

- **Congressman Vela Personal Staff**

- What is your bed space at Rio Grande Valley?
 - ICE: We are at 97% capacity. The actual numbers are not available to share.
- How much bed space are you working to free up?
 - ICE: It is always our goal to get our bed space within appropriation levels. Right now, we are at 97% capacity.